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By ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE Author of "Caleb Conover, Railroader," "Dr. Dale," "On Glory's Trail," etc. NEW YORK

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"No? You wouldn't be likely to, I s'pose. While you're home evenin's learnin' hymns, he's out learnin' life Spends most of his evenin's round at the fire-house. Why, that kid knows the name of each engine in town the mame of each engine in town the minute he hears 'em whistle."

Iy. A most flattering attention—far different from the slight aloofness of the evening's earlier moments—greeted his every word. Caine, however, seemed actually jealous of his friend's popularity; for he cut in now with a complete change of subject.

"I wonder," he conjectured, address-minute he hears 'em whistle."

response confused Caleb; who started off on a new tack.

"Yes, Billy's a great boy. He used to have a lot of cumnin' tricks, too when he was little. He's out-grownin' cm now. Used to tiptoe up behind me an' put both his dirty little hands over my eyes an' say: 'Guess who's here?' An' when I'd guess 'General Grant' an' 'Abe' Lincoln' and 'Queen Victoria' an' 'Tom Platt' an' a lot of other big guns; till all of a sudden I'd guess 'Billy Shevlin!' An' he'd squeal out 'Yes!' Not much sense in it. But kind of cute for such a little feller. I remember some folks were callin' there one day an' I wanted him to play that game to show off before 'em. But he was kind of bashful and wouldn't. An' that made me mad: so I cuffed him over made me mad; so I cuffed him over the head. An' since then, somehow

the head. An' since then, somehow he's never played it any more."

"I don't wonder!" sped Clive. "I—excuse me, sir," he caught himself up, "I didn't mean to be rude."

"Go ahead." laughed Caleb. "That ain't rude. It's bein' honest. Don't let 'em make a Miss Nancy of you by teachin' you to 'pologize an' say 'please,' an' 'Sir' an' all those folderols."

"I like to say them." retorted Clive, "And I'm not a Miss Nancy. Last week I thrashed a boy two years older

"Look out, Conover!" warned Caine, solemnly. "He may pick you for the next victim."

At the sound of the name, Clive had glanced sharply at Caleb. "I beg your pardon," he put in, now.
"But you aren't 'Brute' Conover, are

"Clive!" admonished Caine, with what severity he could summon up. "I b'lieve I've been called that a few times." answered Caleb, in high good humor. "Why?" "Because." said Clive. backing to-

years, to touch liquor at all; although in early days his Gargantuan drinking bouts had been the wonder of the local Underworld. On his unaccustomed senses the slight stimulant now acted with redoubled force. It happened his wits, banished his first feeling of stiff discomfort, enabled him to come out

Caine talking animatedly just op-posite, was nevertheless looking un-obstrusively at Conover. So were Reu-ben Standish and others at the table. To their varied relief or disappoint-ment the big, silent man had per-petrated thus far nine of the capers

signs of housebrokenness, ventured a few perfunctory remarks to him. Caleb replied briefly, but without emparrassment. He even answered a question put him from across the table with the same self-possession. Caine relaxed his nervous vigilance. His relaxed his nervous vigilance here of them. In rown stand, hotting either of them. In rown upon herself for comfort, she decided the rough guest had intended his asinine remark as a compliment. The thought did much to console her. She glanced, sideways, at him, with a new interest; and, Calne, relieved, saw the 'Fair Weather' standard flying once question put him from across the table with the same self-possession. Caine relaxed his nervous vigilance. His reluctant admiration for the newcome

that when Mrs. Standish's glasses dif-fused that look he was always sore tempted to bow his head and murmur

"Yes." prattled the Saint, "her's is a heaven-sent gift. I believe that singing may often bear a message—"
"It's easier. I should think." put in Caleb. suddenly finding his tongue as he set down his empty wine glass, "for

by humans.

"Fr instance." he proceeded, with renewed courage, mistaking the general hush of surprise for a gratifying interest, "there's a lady I know here in Granite who has a canary bird that sings all about the death of Ase. Sings it fine tee.

Letty giggled.

Letty giggled.

"So you are a Grieg fiend; like so many other Granite people just now. Mr. Conover?" said she.

"Me?" Caleb exclaimed, in genuine astonishment. "No, indeed, ma'am. I leave dope of all sorts alone."

There was a laugh. Caleb did not quite see the point but felt dimly that he had scored a hit. Caine came to his rescue.

"It is of no importance at all." protested Standish, guiltily avoiding his sister-in-law's saintly gaze. "I—"

"But I want to know." persisted Caleb. "Where'd the glasses come from?"

"Why." smiled Standish with a painful effort at careless good-nature. "I believe they're some we picked up in Venice once. But they—"

"Well. I'll send there for 'em. then."

mis rescue.

"What a pity the bird couldn't have been pressed into service for the musicale." he observed. "It would be a real comfort to hear the 'Death of Ase' is new form."

"It would be a Strangely enough. everyone seemed to be talking at once, and no one seemed to be looking either at him or at Standish. In cool, level, unhurried tones they were speaking; these denimons world, into whose

the fire-house. Why, that kid knows the fire-house. Why, the fire-house the fire-house the fire-house the fire-house the fire-house. Why, the fire-house the fire-house the fire-house the fire-house the fire-house. Why, the complete change of subject. "I wonder," he conjectured, addressing no one in particular, "why tenors invariably are born without intelligence. When Providence gives a man agreet tenor voice, He gives him nothing else. Perhaps, though, he needs nothing else."

But an avalanche of trite saving

would a' fried an iceberg. One night. would a fried an iceberg. One night, I remember, we brought the ol' sot home worse'n usual. She was right there with the tongue-lashin'. She told him what a swine he was to spend all his fam'ly's cash on booze and how he was a disgrace to his town, an' other wice conferming the life. he was a disgrace to his town, an other nice comfortin' things like that. She wound up by screechin': 'An' you haven't a single redeemin' trait, you haven't a single redeemin' trait, you worthless drunkard!' That was too much for Wetherwolks. He 'clasped on the bottom step and began to cry. 'You're right, m'dear,' he whines. 'Ev'ry word you say is true. I haven't a single redeemin' trait. But,' an' here he throws his chest out an' looks stern an' noble. 'But in ev'ry respec' I'm a dam' fine man!'"

The anecdote somehow did not "go"

The anecdote somehow did not "go" as well as when Conover had told it in the back room of Kerrigan's saloon. But if there was constraint in its re-ception, he did not observe it. Letty. dropping her voice, to shut him out of

the general talk, inquired:
"Where is Pompton? I don't think
I ever heard of it. Did I- Are our
Pompton Avenue and the Pompton
Club named for it?"

imes," answered Caleb, in high good humor. "Why?"

"Because," said Clive, backing toward the door, "from what I read in the newspapers about you,—and from something I once heard Grandpa say,—I don't think I care to know you. Mr. Conover. I'm sorry. Good night."

Caleb Conover had not known there were so many kinds of folks in existence. From his oyster plate they stretched away to the left in what seemed an interminable vista. Had Desiree told him to begin with the left-hand fork and work inward, as the courses progressed? Of was it the right-hand fork he was to begin with and work outward? A furtive glance at Letty, on his fight, solved the problem.

Then, the same glance sweeping the "table, he found he was the only person whose doubled napkin had not disappeared. He pulled it unnoticed down to his knee. A roll fell from its hidden interior and crashed to the floor with a report that sounded to him loud and sombrely attacked his oysters.

A cocktail had heralded the meal. This, with his glass of dry sherry, now began little by little to cut away the Fighter's crust of straight self-consciousness. He was not wont, of late years, to touch liquor at all; although in early days his Gargantuan drinking bouts had been the wonder of the local bout and powel at a self-consel, and her proposed dames! I marriage in such a set were really the keystone to social achievement, he felt he might do far worse than choose this comely, quivering-nosed dames! The such as the only local and the Pompton Club named for it?"

"Idon't think so," he answered. "It's a little place, 'way up in the North Club named for it?"

"Idon't think so," he answered. "It's a little place, 'way up in the North Club named for it?"

"Idon't think so," he speydills. Swarmin' with commut-ers, by now, I s'pose. I used to live there for a while, once, when I was lake, with the soft green hills. Swarmin' it ilike they loved it. The search of the form a while, once, when I was learnin' railroadin'. There's a lake, with the soft green hills. Caleb lake was n the keystone to social achievement, he felt he might do far worse than choose this comely, quivering-nosed damsel at

this comely, quivering-nosed damsel at his side.

"Fond of rabbits?" he asked—as unintentionally as irrelevantly.

"What an odd question!" she cried, her round eyes raising inciplent distress signals. "Is it a joke?"

"No," he answered, floundering, "I—I just happened to say it. You—you look just a littly like one. A very pretty one of course," he supplemented with mammoth gallentry.

Her eyes, this time, holsted the disf himself and take note of what went

Her eyes, this time, hoisted the dis-tress signal so perceptibly that Caine, skilled to read the signs, broke off in which comic stories ascribe to par-venus. He handled his soup-spoon with an inward sweep, it is true; but he ate quietly and as one not wholly unac-customed to civilized methods, De-siree's long and stern training was standing him in good stead. standing him in good stead. tete, the others were not, at the in-Letty, emboldened by these repeated stant, noticing either of them. Thrown ness; even while she was responding to her hosts' welcome. As soon as she could leave Mrs. Hawarden's side, she moved toward him. As he advanced to meet her, the labored grin of festivity wherewith Caleb had sought to wreathe his features for her benefit, gave way to a boyish glow of pleasure.

"Gee, but you're dandy to look at in those clo'es, Dey!" he exclaimed.

"There ain't a one in the room who's a patch on you."

She smiled up at him in frank joy at the compilment. Then, looking

luctant admiration for the newcomer was increasing.

Conover, with the true fighter's intuition, noted all the tokens of his own well-being, and his dawning self-possession grew steadily stronger.

The talk at his end of the table had turned into musical channels.

"We were able to get Miss Tyson for the musicale after all." Letty was saving. "She was to have sung at the Worcester Music Festival, you know; but at the last moment they engaged glasses. Caleb, recalling the efiguettebut at the last moment they engaged someone else."

"We are so grateful," chimed in Mrs Standish, managing to inject just a little recognition of the Divine into her tone. "She has a wonderful voice. In Munich she ones sung the Korest Rind Munich she ones sung the Korest Rind Munich she ones sung the Korest Rind.

Munich she once sung the Forest Bird music in a performance of Siegfried. Just think! One of our own townswemen, too!"

She cast a vitreous beam athwart the table as she spoke. Caine used to say that when Mes Standish's glasses diff. ing any and every eye that might dare to show derision. "It doesn't matter. Mr. Standish!" he

called down the table to his host. "I'll save the pieces and send you a whole set like it to-morrow. Where'd'you buy it?"

"It is of no consequence at all," re-turned Standish, the consumption spots on his cheek bones burning a little a woman to sing like a forest bird darker red than usual. He turned to than for a bird to sing songs made up the neighbor with whom he had been talking, and with his usual dry cough took up the shattered thread of con-versation. But Caleb was resolved not to permit his overtures at restitu-tion to be slighted.

there was no triumph in her words.
"I knew how it would be. Oh, if only I could have been here to take care of you, you poor lamb among social lions! Listen to me! You're not to stir from my side all evening. Understand? Now mind me! I am soling to see that no. mind me! I am going to see that no-body is woozey to you or lets you stand all frumped up alone in a corner "Where'd you buy it?" he repeated, raising his voice a little. "I want to know so I—" any more."
"An' spoil your own good time?"
snorted Caleb. "Not much! You chase

"It is of no importance at all," protested Standish, guiltily avoiding his sister-in-law's saintly gaze. "I—"
"But I want to know." persisted Caleb. "Where'd the glasses come on an' get talked to an' made much of, you little girl! An' I'll get all the fun I want, watchin' the hit you make. That's no lie." "I'd rather be with you, if you don't mird," she insisted. "We're chums. aren't we? We'll, then, mind me and do as I say! We're going to stay right

believe they're some we picked up in Venice once. But they—"
"Well. I'll send there for 'em, then,"
promised Caleb, his defant glance once

in new form."

"Oh, he don't sing all of it," amended Caleb. "He just sings the first part. I forget quite how it goes. But he does it fine. Only, to my mind," with an air of profound criticism. "he sings it kind of sprightly for such a sad piece. Still. I s'pose that's a matter of taste."

Conover felt he was getting on fine-



print" column, how an oyster calmly glozes over the grain of irritating sand that has found unwelcome refuge with-in its shell. He felt humiliatingly like

the nucleus of such a pearl. And with the thought, and the waning of the wine's effects, came wholesome anger.

"I've got more cash than the whole

rve got more cash than the whole crowd of 'em put together," he told himself fiercely.

The reflection did much to build up his wobbling self-esteem. But, for the rest of the meal, he sat glum. After an endless, dreary aeon of time, Mrs. Standish's everglasses flashed to the

Standish's eye-glasses flashed to the

others of her sex the signal to retire. Everyone rose. The women, collecting from the men beside them the hand-

kerchiefs, fans and other feminine ac-cessories that strewed the floor under the table, filed out, chatting and laugh-ing. Caleb, not minded to seem in-ferior to any man by hanging back

and giving precedence to others, left the room at the heels of the last wom-"Oh, Conover!" called Caine, as the

Fighter's shoulders vanished through

"I wanted to ask you something about Steeloid Preferred, if you don't mind." continued Amzi. A backward look told Conover that

the men were re-seating themselves He also saw the meaning of his men

tor's summons. At that moment Caleb came nearer feeling gratitude toward Caine that ever he had felt it for any man. He slouched back, unconcernedly: lighted a cigar, shook out his match and dropped into the vacated chair at Calne's left. Mentally be received to tear the etitusette book

he resolved to tear the etiquette book, leaf from leaf, for failing to warn him that men outstay women in a dining room. But, with characteristic calm, he refused to be ruffled by the mis-

take.

"What was it you wanted to ask me?" said he.

"About Steeloid," repeated Caine, "and about a rumor I heard that the Rogers-Whitman Company is—"
"Don't let us talk business," growled Conover. "I never talk shop when I'm out in s'ciety. It's bad form. I'd rather chat just now 'bout music."

rather chat just now bout music."
He was himself again; loudly self-

"This feller, Back, they were speakin' about at dinner to-night," he went
on. "I'm kind o' rusty on op'ras, lately. So I've lost track of him. Is he
composin' much, nowadays?"

"Bach has been de-composing for a

couple of centuries," answered Caine. One or two men laughed. Caleb waxed glum once more. Nor could the combined tact of Caine and their host

draw him again into speech.

The Fighter, glowering in a corner

watched the stream of musicale guests trickle in through the great double doors. He was lonely, cross, disap-pointed. He could not define his own

pointed. He could not define his own sensations, nor see how nor wherein he had failed. Failure he had met. He knew that. But the knowledge made him the more determined to persist in his assault until the social cita-

del whose outworks he had stormed, should be his. And, the more he

with a knot of newcomers. Once his eye caught hers, and she smiled. A polite, deprecatory smile that strength-

ened Caleb's growing resolution. After all, he reflected, one might do worse

than to marry.

An indefinable something swept across his busily-planning mind, like a breath of May through a slum. Even

before he raised his eyes eagerly to the door, he knew that Desiree Shevlin had come into the room. Slender, dainty infinitely pretty, in her woft white dress, the sight of her struck athwart

Caleb's senses, scattering to the winds every thought but delight at seeing

her,—pride in the way she bore herself among the people in whose presence he felt so ill at ease.

And the had seen him. Seen him and noted his discomfiture, his alone-

at the compliment. Then, looking more keenly into his face, she mur-mured, her pretty brows knit:

"You poor, poor boy! You've been having a horrid, hagorous time! What have they been doing to you?"

In her voice was a vehement, motherly note; as of indignation against the

ill-treatment accorded a loved, defici-ent child. Caleb felt it and it was as balm to his scratched sensibilities. But he laughed loudly as he made shift to

me fine an' I've had an out o' sight time. Honest, I—"
"Caleb!"

"They made me quite one of 'em,' he bragged, the more earnestly for her unbelief. "I haven't had such a good time in a couple o' years. I—"
"Caleb Conover! Look me in the

"It was rotten!" he admitted rue fully; his defense, as ever, breaking to pieces before the onslaught of her sweet imperiousness. "I knew it!" she made answer; but

(To be Continued.)

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of entering that citadel under a wife's aegis began to take definite shape. He found bis gaze straying to where Letty Standish stood laughing and talking

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